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C O N F I D E N T I A L TASHKENT 003414

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [PREL](#) [RU](#) [UZ](#)  
SUBJECT: RUSSIAN BUSINESSMEN TAKE OVER GULNORA'S NIGHTCLUBS

CLASSIFIED BY AMB. JON R. PURNELL, FOR REASONS 1.4 (B, D).

REFS: A) TASHKENT 3082 B) TASHKENT 3019

11. (C) First Daughter Gulnora Karimova has recently spun off management of her main Tashkent nightclub complex to a group of Russian businessmen. The complex includes Basha Nightclub (now renamed "Club"), Fashion Bar and Prestige Cinema. Gulnora does not, however, seem to have given up control of her Credit First Standard Bank, which is located in the same building as the three clubs. The head of the group that has taken over the clubs is Sergei Aliyev, an ethnic-Tatar from Moscow. Most people only know him by his first name. His partners include "Otabek" (manager of the Fashion Bar) and an ethnic-Greek Russian. The wife of the ethnic-Greek businessman told poloff that Gulnora has agreed to relinquish management of the clubs for the next five years while retaining ownership. She will remain in the background with little involvement in the club's everyday affairs. The businessman's wife also told poloff that Gulnora has moved away from nightclubs in order to dedicate more time to serious "political" pursuits.

12. (C) Several Moscow-based Russian singers and DJs have already been invited to perform at the nightclub. An increasing number of "new Russians" have been seen in Tashkent's nightspots lately, especially at Gulnora's complex and at Lola Karimova's "Katakomba" nightclub. Regular party-goers at these clubs all know one another and are a fairly small group, so the "new Russians" easily stand out. Most are driving around in expensive cars with blue corporate/business license plates. Gulnora, who is very fond of Russian music, still visits the "Club" nightclub on Friday and Saturday evenings, occasionally bringing her teenaged son.

13. (C) Comments: Coming so soon after the signing of the Russian-Uzbek agreement in Moscow (ref A), the Russian "takeover" of Gulnora's main nightspots prompted much gossip in Tashkent's social circles. While it may have only been a shrewd business decision to improve the management of the nightclubs, it is also plausible that Gulnora now intends to focus her time and energy on other pursuits. In addition to her business activities, she has recently been intensively traveling all around the country providing charitable grants to the needy, no doubt in order to boost her public image (ref B).

PURNELL